

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 15766

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR GW US CH
SUBJECT: VISIT TO PEKING OF THEO SOMMER

1. THEO SOMMER, CHIEF EDITOR OF "DIE ZEIT," HAS TOLD US THAT HE WILL BE VISITING PEKING BETWEEN OCTOBER 7 AND 22. HE IS GOING AS ONE OF A GROUP OF TEN GERMAN EDITORS-IN-CHIEF INVITED BY THE CHINESE IN RETURN FOR AN EARLIER GERMAN INVITATION TO TEN CHINESE EDITORS-IN-CHIEF.

2. SOMMER IS ONE OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL JOURNALISTS IN GERMANY. HIS PAPER, A WEEKLY, IS MODERATELY LIBERAL. IT FOLLOWS WORLD AFFAIRS MORE CLOSELY THAN MOST GERMAN JOURNALS. SOMMER HIMSELF IS A FREQUENT TRANSATLANTIC TRAVELER, A CLOSE CONFIDANT OF CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT AND FOREIGN MINISTER GENSCHER, AND A GOOD FRIEND OF THE UNITED STATES. HE HAS ALSO, TO THE BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE, NOT BEEN KNOWN TO BETRAY A CONFIDENCE IN PRINT.

3. SOMMER WAS IN PEKING IN 1975 WITH CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT. HE WOULD LIKE, ON THIS OCCASION, TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE DOMESTIC SITUATION IN THE PRC AS WELL AS ABOUT CHINESE ATTITUDES AND POLICIES TOWARD THE OUTSIDE WORLD.
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4. SOMMER HAS ASKED TO GET IN TOUCH WITH OUR MISSION IN PEKING AND WE HAVE RECOMMENDED THAT HE CALL DCM ROY'S OFFICE WHEN HE ARRIVES. HE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE THE OCCASION TO TALK FRANKLY WITH MISSION OFFICERS AND HAS INDICATED THAT HE WILL, OF COURSE, RESPECT THE LIMITS OF CONFIDENTIALITY REQUESTED BY MISSION OFFICERS. WE WOULD

APPRECIATE IT IF THE MISSION WOULD BE ABLE TO MEET WITH
HIM AND BRIEF HIM FRANKLY.
MEEHAN

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